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ABSTRACT

This document suggests a process that North Dakota vocational instructional program advisory committee (VIP) chairpersons and educational personnel may follow to improve the organizational structure of the committee and carry out its work. Part 1 discusses the purpose and roles of the VIP committee, the role of the chairperson, and the role of the educator. Part 2 recommends procedures and policies for establishing a committee, which includes information on the size of the committee, its term of service, the selection of members, the selection process and duties of officers, the orientation of new members, the committee charter or constitution, and the bylaws. Part 2 also includes samples of an invitation letter to a potential committee member, a letter of appointment, a charter, and bylaws. Part 3 contains guidelines for planning, conducting, and preparing minutes of the meetings. Samples of an agenda for a meeting to organize the committee, an agenda for a regular meeting, a notice of a meeting, and minutes of a meeting are included. Part 4 recommends and explains five steps for planning committee work: establish annual priorities, specify committee activities, develop planning tasks, assign responsibilities, and establish time lines. Six sample work sheets are included. Part 5 tells how the committee can formulate recommendations, includes sample recommendations, and suggests the periodic review of its program of work. (CML)

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NORTH DAKOTA

VIP

VOCATIONAL
INSTRUCTIONAL
PROGRAM

ADVISORY
COMMITTEES

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LEADERSHIP GUIDE

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NORTH DAKOTA
VIP

VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

LEADERSHIP GUIDE

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Foreword

Recent studies have shown that the overall quality of vocational-technical education varies from program to program. These studies have also found that one of the most common characteristics associated with "quality programs" is their close tie to the business community. In order to improve the quality of vocational-technical education, a greater effort must be made to encourage stronger partnerships between these programs and the workplace. Local vocational advisory committees are, in many cases, the most effective way to develop this partnership.

The National Alliance of Business, the White House Office of Private Sector Initiatives, and others have called for increased private sector participation in and recognition of local vocational advisory committees. With this renewed interest in local advisory committees, North Dakota is enhancing and promoting these committees as **Vocational Instructional Program (VIP) Advisory Committees.**

VIP advisory committees are designed to promote greater cooperation between vocational-technical education and the private sector in:

- Preparing individuals for employment and self-employment.
- Promoting quality vocational-technical education.
- Making the vocational-technical education system more responsive to the labor market.

In addition, VIP advisory committees are designed to enhance the participation of the public (particularly local employers and employees) in vocational-technical education at the local level.

In North Dakota, the State Board for Vocational Education has reaffirmed its commitment to advisory committees by developing the following position:

"Each eligible recipient (local education agency) receiving assistance from the State Board for Vocational Education to operate vocational education programs shall establish a local advisory committee to provide advice on current job needs and in the relevancy of courses being offered by the agency in meeting such needs. Such advisory committees may be established for respective program areas or on a school/institution basis, depending upon size of school, number of programs, and other considerations."

The purpose of this guide is to help VIP advisory committee chairpersons and education personnel improve the overall quality of vocational-technical education in North Dakota. This guide outlines a suggested process that VIP advisory committees may follow to improve the organizational structure of the committee and plan and carry out a program of work based on the needs of the program and the requirements of the community it serves.

Purpose and Role of VIP Advisory Committees

PART 1.

While the name "Vocational Instructional Program (VIP) Advisory Committee" is new, the concept and practice of local vocational advisory committees has been around for several decades. This part of the guide describes the purpose of the committee, the roles of the committee, and the roles of the chairperson and educator.

Purpose of the Committee

The primary purpose of VIP advisory committees is to help schools and institutions improve the quality of instruction in programs that prepare workers in occupations requiring vocational-technical education. These committees are officially appointed by institutions or governing boards of local education agencies and are drawn primarily from the private sector with appropriate public sector representation. Members are volunteers who share an expert knowledge of the job tasks and competency requirements for specific occupations.

VIP advisory committees have no legislative, administrative, or programmatic authority.

Roles of the Committee

VIP advisory committees have three major roles. They are to **advise, assist,** and provide **support and advocacy** for quality vocational-technical education.

In an advising role, the VIP advisory committee assesses specific areas of the vocational-technical education program and formulates suggestions and recommendations designed to improve that specific area. Suggestions and/or recommendations should be presented formally to the administration. Examples of recommendations could include the modification of curriculum content, the purchase of new instructional materials or high-tech equipment, the adoption of a new safety policy, etc.

In an assisting role, the VIP advisory committee helps the instructor or administrator carry out specific activities. Examples could include judging competitive skill events, setting up a scholarship program, obtaining media coverage for special events, etc.

In a support and advocacy role, the VIP advisory committee promotes the quality of vocational-technical programs throughout the community. Examples could include talking to legislators, showing support of vocational-technical education at board meetings, writing articles for local newspapers, etc.

Role of the Chairperson

The chairperson plays a critical role in maximizing the effectiveness of the committee. The chairperson sets the tone for the committee, because it is he or she who helps develop the agenda and moves the committee through each agenda item. The chairperson must be aware of the role and responsibilities of the position of chairperson. There are four major elements to becoming a successful chairperson:

- **Keep the committee's purpose in mind**

The VIP advisory committee's one overriding purpose is to help improve and modernize the vocational-technical program it is serving. The committee's role is to advise, assist, and become an active supporter and advocate of vocational-technical education. It has **no** legislative, administrative, or programmatic authority. The committee works cooperatively with school officials in planning and carrying out committee work. The chairperson should help members avoid possible conflicts of interest.

- **Take charge**

To be effective, advisory committee members must feel that their time and expertise are being utilized. Members need action in order to gain a sense of self-fulfillment. The chairperson, together with the educator, needs to create an environment that will result in an effective and successful committee. Draw on the expertise of individual committee members. Help make them feel a part of the committee process. Don't let any one member or school official dominate the discussion. Make committee assignments to individual members who show the most enthusiasm for a given topic. Call on noncontributing members to give them a sense of belonging. The main objective of the chair is to create and maintain a cohesive, working group.

- **Expect results**

An effective committee is one that knows in advance that something positive will occur as a result of their work. To have something occur, the committee must be goal directed. The committee must decide what it is that they want to accomplish and then develop a plan to accomplish it. The chairperson guides the members through a series of discussions resulting in a program of work which will lead to an anticipated outcome.

- **Be organized**

Well-organized committee meetings add to the committee's effectiveness. The chair should meet with school officials at least two weeks prior to a committee meeting and plan an agenda. The agenda should include minutes of the most recent committee meeting, standing committee and subcommittee reports, officer reports, and unfinished and new business. The chair should pace the meeting to complete all agenda items in an organized way and on time. The committee should know well in advance the date, time, and location of all meetings. A good practice is to set a tentative date for the next committee meeting prior to adjourning.

Role of the Educator

The role of the educator in developing and working with advisory committees is critical to the effectiveness, value, and success of the committee. In order for the committee members to gain a sense of satisfaction from serving on an advisory committee, the educator must actively promote the idea that he or she truly believes in the concept of advisory committees and is willing to accept and carry out the committee's actions. Effective guidelines for educators in working with advisory committees include:

- **Appoint leaders to the committee**

Nominate persons whose opinions are respected. Even outspoken critics often become supportive once they know all the facts. The value of any recommendation of the committee will be essentially equal to the collective respect that the community, institution, and/or board have for the members of the committee.

- **Provide information and follow through**

Provide accurate and concise information so sound conclusions and recommendations can be made. Members need all the information necessary to make informed decisions and recommendations. They will appreciate not being overburdened with a flow of unnecessary or unrelated information.

To earn the respect of the members of the committee, be honest and candid with the members. Don't hesitate to lay out actual or potential problems or to point out worthwhile accomplishments. The committee needs to be able to see both sides of the coin.

It is important to always follow through with any reasonable request from or promise to the committee. If you cannot comply with a request, give the committee the rationale for why it is not possible to carry out their request.

- **Provide guidance and support**

New members should be oriented to their responsibilities and tasks because the committee's success depends on how well the members understand their role. Likewise, newly elected chairpersons need direction and guidance to grow into a leadership role. The instructor should meet with the chairperson to review this leadership guide, committee bylaws, and past accomplishments, and to answer any questions the chairperson may have.

Available services such as clerical work and arranging meetings and other details should be discussed with the committee. The person or persons who will assist the committee should understand that this will be part of their responsibility.

- **Expect results**

Let the committee members know that they are important, that they can provide valuable service to the program, and that results are expected. It may be desirable to discuss this expectation as well as an accurate assessment of their time when first discussing possible membership with an individual. This type of attitude and expectation will enhance member attendance at meetings and activities.

The instructor should make every effort not to sway the committee with his or her personal bias or with recommendations that may be viewed as a conflict of interest.

One of the best ways to encourage attendance and participation is to give the committee real problems and situations to discuss. The persons who help plan the committee meetings should assure that the meetings will actually solicit the input of members and help them to see the value of the committee's contributions.

- **Recognize outstanding members**

Reward mechanisms are important to every organization because they encourage attendance and involvement. Moreover, recognition efforts attract the attention and interest of other qualified people who may someday serve in the organization. Additionally, they bring public attention and goodwill to the organization because they demonstrate that the organization appreciates the efforts of its members.

Reward and recognition are especially important to VIP advisory committees because members are not paid for their efforts. Rewards should not be given indiscriminately but should be based on actual contribution to the committee's activity. They must be distributed equitably, concentrating on individual efforts.

The best types of rewards or recognition are those that can increase productivity, improve committee interaction, and increase member satisfaction. The strategies need not be elaborate. Most members are willing to attend regularly and work hard, as long as their talents are used in tasks that involve them in the program, their recommendations are seriously considered, and they are given feedback about the recommendations and efforts.

Using the meetings as a means of reporting program activities and asking the committee to address trivial matters is counterproductive. The best reward is to ask for advice and respond to it. Opportunities and ways in which committee members may be recognized by school or other vocational-technical education officials include:

- Issue press releases announcing member appointments.
- Report at meetings on the results of adopting committee recommendations and the ways the committee has been of service.
- Invite members to visit programs to see the actual results of their recommendations.
- Invite members to attend special vocational-technical education events.
- Introduce advisory committee members at vocational-technical education meetings or events.
- Send personal letters to committee members about the results of their advice and recommendations.
- Send each member a letter of thanks and appreciation, signed by the appropriate school official, at the end of the year.
- Send a letter of appreciation to the advisory committee member's supervisor and/or company, explaining the good job being done by the member and thanking the company for its support.
- Hold a banquet in honor of the committee and present a certificate of service to each member.
- Schedule a meeting that the chief administrator of the school or institution can attend.
- Place members' names on a display board or plaque at the school or institution.
- Be sure that announcements and reports made by administrators about the program include references to the committee members.
- Involve all members in developing the program of work for the year.
- Send a personal note in recognition of special events such as birthdays, anniversaries, and promotions. Include your thanks for the member's work on the committee.

Procedures for Establishing VIP Advisory Committees

PART 2.

An organizational structure and operating procedures of the VIP advisory committee should be developed by the committee members. The structure and procedures are generally developed as a part of the committee's constitution and bylaws. This section outlines areas for committee members to consider as they develop the rules and procedures to govern the operation of the committee.

Included in this section are size of committee, term of service, selection of members, selection process, selection and duties of officers, orientation of new members, charter or constitution, and bylaws.

This information is suggestive only and should not be viewed as the only process for establishing a VIP advisory committee. The charter/constitution and bylaws should be adapted to meet the needs of the local school/institution.

Size of the Committee

The size of the committee may vary by size of the community, scope of the vocational-technical education offering, diversity of businesses and industries in the community, and purpose of the committee. Effective advisory committees should be large enough to reflect the diversity of the community, yet small enough to be managed effectively. Committees with fewer than five members tend to be less effective since they may have limited perspective, inadequate information on a number of target jobs, and too few employers represented. Committees with more than 18 members can become unmanageable.

Term of Service

A rotational, three-year term of service most easily allows for continuity and change. One-third of the total membership will be appointed beginning each year after the first year of operation. To establish this rotation with a new committee, the members draw lots for one-, two-, or three-year terms, with one-third of the committee in each category. New members are appointed as terms expire.

It is recommended, if feasible, that members not be appointed to successive terms and that at least a one-year absence be considered before reappointment. By establishing the length of term as policy, time demands for members will be clarified at the outset.

Selection of Members

To provide effective communication between the vocational-technical programs and the community, VIP advisory committee membership must be representative of the total school service area. Members may be selected from the following:

- Geographical sections of the school service area.
- All types of business and industry, particularly those predominant in the area.
- Both labor and management.
- Community Development Corporation or local Chamber of Commerce members.
- Regional Employment and Training Committee members.
- Job Service personnel.
- Parents of vocational-technical students.
- Former vocational-technical students.

- Various age levels.
- Different educational levels
- Both sexes, handicapped individuals, and racial and ethnic minorities found in the area served by the program.

This representation will include the points of view of segments of the community being served by vocational-technical education. A vocational-technical instructor and a representative of the administration should serve as nonvoting, consulting members. Although the administrative representative need not be present at all meetings, the vocational-technical instructor should attend all meetings to provide information and participate in discussion.

Some personal qualities which are desirable in members are:

- **Interest**

Choose motivated persons who express sincere interest in the program. Members must be willing to devote the energy and attention required to do a good job. This means being dedicated both to their occupation and to the training process.

- **Availability**

Seek members who will be available in terms of time and location. Members are expected to attend meetings, work on projects, and work in the community on behalf of the educational program.

- **Character**

Seek members who have earned the confidence of others in the community. Their good reputation will enhance the program's standing within the community. Members should have the courage to express their own ideas and to respect, tolerate, and work with ideas expressed by others.

- **Skill/Experience**

Seek members who are knowledgeable about the target occupations of the educational programs. Usually this means selecting members who have work experience in the occupation. Seek members who demonstrate good communication skills, administrative skills, social vision, intelligence, and leadership.

Selection Process

Members may be elected or appointed, depending on the policy of the school or institution. One procedure for nominating members is for the vocational-technical instructor(s) and the appropriate administrator to recommend a list of possible nominees to the governing board and/or administrative official. Another procedure that is sometimes used is for the school/institution to contact specific businesses or organizations and have them select someone from their business or organization to serve on the committee. The invitation to serve should be in writing (Illustration 2-1).

Following the nominee's acceptance of the invitation to serve, an appointment letter should be sent from the board and/or administrative official. This letter should also state the term for which appointment is made (Illustration 2-2). The appointment should also be released to the local media for publicity.

The VIP advisory committee chair should contact the new members to welcome them to the committee and to provide them with appropriate material, such as a member's guide.

Selection and Duties of Officers

The success of the committee depends in part on the leadership ability of the officers.

Election of officers may be at the first or last meeting of the school year. Elections held during the last meeting of the school year are preferable. In this way, officers are experienced members and they can plan for the next year during the summer. Also, the first meeting of the new year can be reserved for orienting new members and for establishing the program of work.

Suggested officers are a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary. Procedures, personal characteristics, and duties for each position follow.

- **Chair**

The chair's leadership is the key to the committee's success. Committees should be chaired by a member other than a school representative. The chair should possess skills and characteristics such as:

— Experience in business/industry in the community served by the vocational-technical program.
— Ability to manage meetings, plan and adhere to schedules, involve members in ongoing activities, and reach closure and consensus on issues.
— Skills in oral and written communications as well as willingness to make appearances before school and community representatives to present, explain, and justify recommendations.
— Experience as a committee member.
— Ability to delegate responsibility as well as willingness to accept responsibility for the committee's actions.
— Personal characteristics such as empathy, fairness, tolerance, sound judgment, and attentiveness.

The responsibilities of the chair include:

— Work with school and community representatives to plan and carry out the committee's program of work.
— Prepare meeting agendas and assist school representative in handling details regarding meetings.
— Preside at meetings.
— Arrange activity and keep group efforts focused and all members involved in tasks.
— Delegate tasks and follow-up work.
— Arrange for presenting of background information and reports to the committee.
— Appoint standing committees and subcommittees.
— Represent the committee at official meetings and functions.
— Submit recommendations of the committee to appropriate administrators and groups.
— Follow up on committee recommendations or actions.

- **Vice Chair**

The skills and responsibilities of the vice chair are identical to those of the chair.

- **Secretary**

The secretary records meeting minutes and performs many clerical duties. Committees may use a school representative in this position because of the person's access to typing and reproduction facilities.

The qualifications and skills of the secretary include:

— Experience on the committee and an understanding of the vocational-technical program.
— Ability to organize detailed material into a meaningful whole.
— Writing skills.
— Ability to work with school personnel, employment representatives, and committee members.

The responsibilities of the secretary include the following:

— Take minutes at meetings; prepare and distribute minutes.
— Mail agenda, announcements, minutes, and other information to members.
— Help assemble and distribute necessary background information to members.
— Correspond with representatives of school and community as needed.

Orientation of New Members

New members should be oriented to their responsibilities and tasks. The committee's success depends on how well members understand their role. Orientation should continue, as needed, throughout the school year.

Included in the orientation would be a review of the member's guide, the committee's constitution and bylaws, and past accomplishments; a tour of the facilities; and presentations about the program by the instructor, program graduates, and current trainees. Discussion of previous committee work plans, current issues within the program, employer responsibilities in work-related activities, and what is expected of committee members should also be included.

Charter or Constitution

Effective VIP committees are guided by a charter or constitution in which the governing board presents guidelines and policy for the committee in the following areas:

- Name of the committee and its governing board
- Purpose
- Relationship to the educational governing board
- Membership
- Organizational structure
- Procedural rules or bylaws

The charter or constitution must be a written document, included as part of the official policy guidelines of the local educational agency or institution. Once approved, it can be amended only by the governing board. The committee develops its bylaws and operational rules.

Illustration 2-3 is a sample charter or constitution for a VIP advisory committee. The example is an illustration only and is not intended to be all-inclusive. The constitution or charter should be tailored to the needs and requirements of the program and the school/institution.

Bylaws

Bylaws are operational rules. They cover the operation of the committee, selection of officers, appointment of subcommittees, responsibilities of members, and establishment of the program of work.

Because the rules of operation may need to change as the program of work or committee membership changes, the bylaws should be reviewed and discussed at the beginning of each school year. Illustration 2-4 is a sample of committee bylaws and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Illustration 2-1.
Sample
Invitation
Letter

Date

Linda Edwards
213 West Lyons
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Ms. Edwards:

Your experience and demonstrated competence have led to your recommendation for membership on the Vocational Instructional Program Advisory Committee. The Committee is composed of outstanding business, industry, and civic representatives from our community. It works to forge closer cooperation between business and education by continually improving the vocational-technical preparation for students in the (name of vocational instructional program). Your insight into training needs and competencies would be of great value.

We realize your time is limited; we will make every effort to keep our meetings prompt, precise, and purposeful. There will be (number) meetings a year for each of the three years of your term.

We invite you to become a member of the Committee; your three-year term would begin on July 15. Please consider this invitation and inform us of your decision by May 15. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Administrative Official

Illustration 2-2. Sample Appointment Letter

Date

Don Busher
421 West Park
Fargo, ND 58102

Dear Mr. Busher:

Congratulations on your three-year appointment to the (name of program) VIP Advisory Committee. Thank you for your willingness to serve. Your contribution will keep the program effective and up to date as well as help to make our community a better place in which to live and work.

Your first meeting as a member is scheduled for August 1 at 7 p.m. in the (name and address of school). H.V. Green, the committee chair, will contact you soon to provide you with a tentative agenda and other materials.

We look forward to working with you. If you have any questions, please call.

Sincerely,

Administrative Official

Illustration 2-3. Sample Charter

CHARTER
(NAME OF PROGRAM)
VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

I. Name

The committee will be called the (name of committee).

II. Purpose

The committee is created for the purpose of working with the (name of vocational program) and will limit its activities to advising, assisting, and advocating on matters that directly concern the instructional program. The committee's work should be designed to help (school/institution) improve the quality of instruction.

III. Relationship of Committee to Educational Governing Board

It is the role and sole prerogative of the board and/or administrative official to enact policy. The VIP advisory committee may offer recommendations for and provide information relevant to policy about the instructional program to the administration and instructors.

IV. Membership

Composition. The VIP advisory committee will consist of (number of) members. Members will be selected and appointed by the board and/or administrative official. VIP advisory committee members will constitute a cross-section of the employment community, with special emphasis on private sector employees and employers. Moreover, a majority of the committee membership should be employers and employees in the target jobs.

Term. A term of office will last for three years, with one-third of the membership appointed each year. Terms will not be renewable within (number of) months after conclusion of an earlier term. Terms will begin on (date).

V. Officers

The committee will have a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary who are elected by the membership for one-year terms. Elections for the next term will be held at the last meeting of the present term.

VI. Procedural Rules

Bylaws. The committee will draft and adopt a set of written bylaws. Bylaws require a two-thirds vote for adoption or change.

Meetings. The committee will meet at least (number of) times per year. Written notices will be mailed to members at least (number of) days before each meeting.

Minutes. Minutes of each meeting will be kept. Copies will be mailed to the board, local administrator, instructors, and committee membership.

Recommendations and Reports. Committee recommendations and reports will be submitted in writing to the board and/or administrative official. Documents will include both suggested action and justification for suggestions. The board and/or administrative official will respond/react to such recommendations/reports in writing.

Dismissal/Replacement. Members who are absent without reasonable cause from (number of) successive meetings will be considered to have resigned their seat. Members desiring to leave the committee prior to the date their term expires should notify the instructor in writing. The board and/or administrative official will move to fill a vacated position.

Public Announcements. While members are expected and encouraged to discuss the instructional program within the community, members will not report opinions expressed in meetings, nor will they report independently on committee action.

Illustration 2-4. Sample Bylaws

BYLAWS
(NAME OF COMMITTEE)
(NAME OF LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY OR INSTITUTION)

ARTICLE I

Committee Operation

Section 1. Meetings will be held at a time and date specified by the committee.

Section 2. At least (number of) meetings will be held each school year. The exact number of meetings will be determined by the annual program of work.

Section 3. The executive committee will develop the agenda for each meeting.

Section 4. The program of work will be a consideration in setting the agenda for each meeting.

Section 5. Discussion to obtain consensus will be the prevailing procedure used at meetings. Parliamentary procedure will be used when a decision is to be recorded and transmitted as a recommendation.

Section 6. A quorum will consist of a simple majority of appointed members.

Section 7. Meeting minutes will be recorded for each meeting and distributed to each member and appropriate school officials.

ARTICLE II

Subcommittees

Section 1. Standing subcommittees should be established for such areas as deemed necessary by the chairperson.

Section 2. Subcommittees may be of any size.

Section 3. Subcommittees will elect their own chairs.

ARTICLE III

Officers

Section 1. Officers will be elected by a simple majority. Officers will serve a one-year term and may be reelected.

Section 2. Officers will include a chair, a vice chair, and a secretary.

Section 3. Officers will be elected at the first meeting of each new year.

ARTICLE IV

Member Responsibilities

Section 1. Each member will attend meetings and participate in work activities.

Section 2. Each member will study the issues or problems which come before the committee.

ARTICLE V

Program of Work

Section 1. An annual program of work will be established by the committee during its first two meetings each year. Included in the program of work should be goals, objectives, tasks, time lines, person(s) responsible, and date completed.

Bylaws adopted (date).

Planning and Conducting VIP Committee Meetings

PART 3.

Officers direct, coordinate, and facilitate the work of the committee. Planning and conducting meetings deserve special attention so that time is well spent and effort is focused.

Planning Meetings

Successful committees meet **regularly**. Meeting dates are set by the group during development of the annual program of work. Notice of advisory committee meetings should be publicized, and meetings should be open to the public. Consult with the appropriate administrator regarding procedures that are followed in the system.

Each meeting is focused on particular content or issues, held in a comfortable location, and planned well in advance of the meeting date. The general planning process involves reviewing minutes of the last several meetings and the annual program of work in order to create the meeting agenda. Agendas help prevent meetings from becoming "gripe sessions" for instructors or members. A sample agenda for the organizational meeting of an advisory committee and a typical agenda for a regular meeting are outlined in Illustrations 3-1 and 3-2.

The social aspects of the meeting, such as simple refreshments, contribute to group morale and commitment. Some meetings could be held away from the school to encourage an employment community atmosphere. In preparation for the meeting:

- Establish and publicize time, date, and location of each meeting.
- Arrange for meeting room and equipment.
- Notify committee members and appropriate school officials in writing of meeting date and agenda.
- Arrange for refreshments, meals, special presentations, etc., if appropriate.
- Confirm all arrangements several days before meeting.
- Call committee members and staff to remind them of the meeting.
- Prepare materials for issues to be addressed.

Emphasis on attendance and participation in committee work builds commitment and interest. A meeting notice and agenda should be sent in advance to members and appropriate school officials. Minutes from the last meeting should be included unless sent previously. Background materials necessary for completing the work at the upcoming meeting should also be included. A sample notice of a meeting is given in Illustration 3-3.

Conducting Meetings

The following guidelines are useful for managing group activity and interaction at committee meetings:

- State the purpose of the meeting and review the agenda. Some committees set goals or objectives for each meeting as a way of focusing on purposes.
- Encourage all members to speak and to respect the rights and opinions of each individual.
- Ask clarifying questions.

- Periodically, summarize discussion and point out the connections and contradictions between points.
- Use parliamentary procedure for decisions; otherwise, encourage open and informal discussion. The majority rules, but the minority opinion must be heard.
- Consider and resolve one issue at a time.
- Explore and encourage all points of view in working toward consensus.
- Show strong interest in attendance, ideas, and the program of work.
- Distribute work assignments throughout the group.
- Make assignments and work tasks clear and specific; explain expectations, time lines, and products. Discuss background of issues so that everyone shares a common understanding of the terminology and the importance of the problems.
- Structure the meeting to avoid wasted time. This conveys a sense of organization, purpose, and productivity.
- Keep members informed of activities and progress.
- Recognize and reward members. Even a simple thank you is an effective reinforcement.
- Evaluate committee work regularly.

The atmosphere for interaction is critical. It is through discussion that members present views and develop findings, while moving toward consensus. The most productive atmosphere in a group meeting is a supportive atmosphere. The least productive atmosphere is a defensive one. Creating a productive atmosphere is time well spent.

The tone for the year is set by the first or second meeting. The following ideas help establish a positive tone.

- Concentrate on establishing a friendly atmosphere, coupled with a seriousness of purpose and the background information necessary to begin the job.
- Emphasize that each member's knowledge and experience are unique and of great potential value to the program.
- Tour the facilities.
- Meet students enrolled in the vocational program.
- Invite board and/or administrative official to a meeting.
- Provide the opportunity for members to begin to know one another in a social context, perhaps during a meal or social time.
- Discuss the expectations for committee work and for member behavior.
- Discuss future meetings, program needs, and past work.
- Call meeting to order and adjourn at the appointed times.

Minutes of Meetings

As the official record of committee activities, minutes keep individuals and groups informed about the committee's concerns, decisions, and activities. They remind members of the group's progress; they document the committee's productivity and its contribution to the vocational-technical program.

Keeping the minutes takes time, skill, and persistence. Minutes must be accurate, thorough, maintained promptly and continuously, uniform in style, and document what took place at the meeting.

Illustration 3-4 is an example of typical minutes for an advisory committee. Specific comments and ideas are attributed to individual members. When done in a supportive way, crediting individuals with specific ideas in the minutes is a very effective method of reinforcing active member participation.

Illustration 3-1. Sample Agenda for Meeting To Organize Committee

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION VIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM 2
SEPTEMBER 15, 1987
7-9 P.M.

Call to Order	School Representative
Welcome	Chief Administrator
Role of the VIP Advisory Committee	School Representative
Overview of Vocational-Technical Program	School Representative
Description of Total Education Program	School Board Official
Introduction of Members	School Representative
New Business	School Representative

- Appoint Bylaws Subcommittee
- Discussion of a Program of Work
- Establish Time, Date, and Location of Next Meeting

Adjourn

MARKETING EDUCATION VIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OASIS RESTAURANT, 1111 SOUTH MAIN
NOVEMBER 17, 1987
6:15-8:30 P.M.

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Unfinished Business

- Report of Response to Previous Committee Recommendations
- Report of Subcommittee on Competencies
- Update on Program of Work for Year
- Other

New Business

- Establish Subcommittee on New Technology
- Assess Equipment and Facilities
- Other

Adjourn

Illustration 3-2.
Sample Agenda for Regular Meeting

Illustration 3-3. Sample Notice of Meeting

Date

Louise Pederson
398 Oaklawn
Williston, ND 58801

Dear Louise:

Our next meeting of the (program name) VIP Advisory Committee will be (date) at (time) p.m. in the (place). Enclosed is a copy of the agenda for the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be (1) to begin study of the employment needs in the community, and (2) to plan student cooperative work experience summer jobs.

We look forward to seeing you. Please notify me by (date) if you cannot attend.

Sincerely,

Committee Chair

Illustration 3-4.
Sample Minutes

HEALTH OCCUPATIONS
VIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 15, 1987
CAFETERIA
VOCATIONAL CENTER

MINUTES

Members Present. Helen Chen, Chuck Dunn, Cecilia Day, Carrie Johnson, Kris Kristoph, Karen Long, Lane Nelson, Carl Cox, and Mattie Walk.

Members Absent. Elizabeth Alexander, Brad Luftus.

Others Present. Phyllis Beckman, Vocational Director.

Call to Order. Chair Long called the meeting to order at 12 noon and expressed appreciation for attendance and participation. She stressed the importance of the committee's continuing support and assistance. Dr. Phyllis Beckman, vocational director, greeted the committee. Her greeting further assured the committee of its importance to educational goals and program vitality.

Minutes. Minutes of the last meeting were approved as submitted.

Unfinished Business. No unfinished business was brought before the committee.

New Business. Chair Long asked the committee to make suggestions concerning "What new requirements does the health field ask of entry-level employees?"

Mr. Nelson indicated that a computer or data processing background would be helpful for employees since most tasks require the use of a central computer connecting all county hospitals. The need for computer training was further emphasized by Ms. Johnson. She indicated that an employee would be more skilled with prior computer knowledge. It was the consensus of the committee that computer training should be added to the Health Occupations program as soon as possible. Brands suggested were Hewlett-Packard, IBM, and Wang. The chair was asked to appoint a subcommittee prior to the next meeting to investigate several kinds of computers and software for possible purchase.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Mattie Walk, Secretary

Planning a VIP Program of Work

PART 4.

To be an effective VIP advisory committee, the work of the committee must be organized and highly structured. This does not mean it has to be complicated. This guide provides a simple process which leads the committee through a series of steps to plan and carry out a program of work.

The overall purpose of the VIP advisory committee is to help schools and institutions improve and modernize the quality of instruction in vocational-technical education. In developing a program of work, the committees should continually keep two things in mind. One is the needs of the program. The second is the requirements of the business community.

To help VIP advisory committees plan an effective program of work, this guide suggests that a sequence of planning steps be used. These include:

- Establishing annual priorities.
- Specifying committee activities.
- Developing planning tasks.
- Assigning responsibilities.
- Establishing time lines.

This part of the guide expands on each of these five planning steps. Illustration 4-1 is a suggested worksheet that committees may use to plan their program of work. Included in this section are sample VIP programs of work.

Establishing Annual Priorities

In developing a program of work, the first thing the VIP advisory committee must do is decide what it is they want to accomplish. This first step is a process identifying and establishing priorities regarding the function of the committee over the course of the school year.

This guide lists nine very broad functions which are generally performed by advisory committees. These functions include:

- Community Relations
- Community Resources
- Curriculum Review and Updating
- Student Organizations
- Job Placement
- Staff Development
- Legislative Process
- Program Review
- Recruitment

These committee functions are not meant to be all-inclusive but, rather, are areas of discussion the committee may want to consider in determining the overall needs of the program. The administrator and/or the instructor are excellent resources to help identify the needs of the program.

There are three items that should be considered as the committee discusses the selection of the committee functions. These include a discussion of past accomplishments, current and future needs of the program, and the current and future needs of the community. The number of functions the committee selects should be kept manageable. In other words, don't take on more than the committee can realistically accomplish.

Illustration 4-2 is a sample program of work in which "Community Relations" was selected as the committee's annual priority.

Specifying Committee Activities

Once the committee has identified its functions, the discussion should become more specific in terms of exactly what it is the committee wants to accomplish.

This guide outlines a series of activities the committee may want to consider as they plan their program of work. These activities include:

- **Community relations activities**

— Increase community awareness of vocational-technical education through newspaper, radio, and TV.
— Present programs to civic and service groups.
— Establishing awards programs to recognize outstanding students, teachers, and community leaders.
— Obtain contributions to promote programs.
— Obtain media coverage for special events.
— Participate in and promote special school events.
— Provide information at school board meetings.
— Assist in developing and carrying out a local marketing plan for vocational-technical education.
— Set up and support a scholarship program.

- **Curriculum activities**

— Identify and verify job tasks.
— Compare content of program with job tasks.
— Review instructional materials for technical accuracy.
— Assist in obtaining instructional materials.
— Recommend equipment and supplies.
— Recommend basic skills curriculum content.
— Recommend safety policies.
— Provide equipment and facilities for specialized training needs.

- **Community resource activities**

— Identify community resource people.
— Provide tours and field trip experiences.
— Provide speakers.

- **Recruitment activities**

— Assist in reviewing teacher selection criteria.
— Assist in recruiting new staff.
— Assist in recruiting potential students.

- **Student organization activities**

— Assist in developing competitive skill events.
— Judge competitive skill events.

— Sponsor student organization activities.
— Sponsor or collect contributions of equipment and supplies for skill events.
— Arrange for display space to promote student organizations and special events.

- **Job placement activities**

— Organize employer/student conferences.
— Notify teachers of job openings for students.
— Provide students with cooperative training sites.
— Promote potential cooperative sites with other employers.
— Assist students in developing interviewing skills.
— Recommend employability skills curriculum content.
— Conduct occupational surveys.
— Hire vocational-technical graduates.

- **Staff development activities**

— Provide inservice activities on current methods and processes for instructors.
— Provide skilled technicians to supplement instructor's experience.
— Provide summer or part-time employment experience to instructors for technical upgrading.
— Support participation of instructors in technical workshops or factory schools.

- **Legislative activities**

— Talk to legislators about needs of vocational-technical education.
— Promote tours for legislators.
— Promote legislative support.

- **Program review activities**

— Review program goals and objectives.
— Participate on program evaluation teams.
— Compare program accomplishments with program objectives.
— Compare student performance standards to business/industry standards.
— Review adequacy of facility as a training site.
— Evaluate quality and quantity of graduates and job placements.
— Make recommendations for program improvement.
— Give periodic reports to administration or school board.

This list of activities is not all-inclusive and should be viewed as possible activities for consideration. Again, the functions and activities should match the needs of the program and community.

Illustration 4-3 is a sample program of work in which the committee has specified two committee activities under the "Community Relations" function.

Developing Planning Tasks

Having selected the committee activities, discussion should center on how the committee plans to carry out the activities. A good exercise to use is "brainstorming," where committee members are encouraged to discuss a wide variety of ideas in which each activity could be accomplished. This is a unique phase of the planning process in that it draws on the diverse background and expertise of each committee member to determine the best course of action to accomplish a particular activity.

Several factors need to be considered, including time, cost, people power, community/school support, etc. Some of these factors may prohibit the committee from designing the most effective method for carrying out a given activity. As a result, the committee may have to develop alternative planning tasks to accomplish the

same end. These planning tasks should be sequenced in the logical order in which they are to be carried out.

Illustration 4-4 is a sample program of work in which the committee has developed planning tasks for each of the two activities they selected under the "Community Relations" function.

Assigning Responsibilities

In order to accomplish each planning task, an individual or individuals must be assigned to carry it out. In some cases, the entire committee may be assigned, while other tasks may best be assigned to the instructor or individual committee members. Individuals assigned should have a clear understanding of what is expected. It would be a good practice for the committee chairperson to review and discuss each planning task with the entire committee so that there is a clear understanding of each task.

Illustration 4-5 is a sample VIP program of work in which the committee designated specific individuals or groups to be reponsible for carrying out each of the planning tasks.

Establishing Time Lines

In addition to clearly understanding what is to be accomplished, each person assigned to a specific planning task should know when the task is to be completed. By establishing time lines for each planning task, the individual members or instructor assigned to a given task can plan accordingly. Tasks completed by the entire committee will generally be performed during regular committee meetings. This will necessitate the setting of future meeting dates well in advance. Tasks assigned to individual members may need to be completed prior to meetings so that a status report can be presented during the committee meeting.

Illustration 4-6 is a sample VIP program of work in which the committee established time lines for each of the planning tasks.

VIP PROGRAM OF WORK	School _____ Program _____			
COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	PLANNING TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES 19___ - 19___ J A S O N D J F M A M J

Illustration 4-1. Sample Worksheet for Program of Work

VIP PROGRAM OF WORK

School _____

Program _____

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	PLANNING TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES 19 _____ - 19 _____											
				J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J

VIP PROGRAM OF WORK

School _____

Program _____

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	PLANNING TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES 19 - 19											
				J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Community Relations															

Illustration 4-2. Sample of "Committee Functions" Column of Program of Work

VIP PROGRAM OF WORK

School _____

Program _____

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	PLANNING TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES 19 - 19 J A S O N D J F M A M J
Community Relations	Increase the community awareness of vocational-technical education.			
	Present program to civic and service groups.			

Illustration 4-3. Sample of "Committee Activities" Column of Program of Work

VIP PROGRAM OF WORK

School _____

Program _____

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	PLANNING TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES 19___ - 19___ J A S O N D J F M A M J
Community Relations	Increase the community awareness of vocational-technical education	Identify one audience in the community to target public awareness activities.		
		Obtain names and addresses of the individuals within the target group.		
		Determine the major benefits vocational-technical education can offer the target audience.		
		Determine cost-effective methods for increasing awareness.		
		Obtain estimates for carrying out public awareness activities.		
		Determine ways to generate revenue.		
		Carry out and evaluate activities.		
	Present program to civic and service groups	Identify and select service and civic groups.		
		Determine relevant information that would benefit each group.		
		Identify committee member(s) to prepare and present information on vocational-technical education.		
		Schedule, present, and discuss effectiveness of this activity.		

Illustration 4-4. Sample of "Planning Tasks" Column of Program of Work

VIP PROGRAM OF WORK

School _____

Program _____

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	PLANNING TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES 19____ - 19____ J A S O N D J F M A M J
Community Relations	Increase the community awareness of vocational-technical education	Identify one audience in the community to target public awareness activities	Committee	
		Obtain names and addresses of the individuals within the target group	Instructor	
		Determine the major benefits vocational-technical education can offer the target audience	Committee	
		Determine cost-effective methods for increasing awareness	Committee	
		Obtain estimates for carrying out public awareness activities	Instructor	
		Determine ways to generate revenue	Committee	
		Carry out and evaluate activities	Committee	
	Present program to civic and service groups	Identify and select service and civic groups	Committee	
		Determine relevant information that would benefit each group	Committee	
		Identify committee member(s) to prepare and present information on vocational-technical education	Member X	
		Schedule, present, and discuss effectiveness of this activity	Member X and Committee	

Illustration 4-5. Sample of "Person(s) Responsible" Column of Program of Work

VIP PROGRAM OF WORK

School _____

Program _____

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES	PLANNING TASKS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIME LINES 19_____ - 19_____											
				J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J
Community Relations	Increase the community awareness of vocational-technical education.	Identify one audience in the community to target public awareness activities.	Committee			X									
		Obtain names and addresses of the individuals within the target group.	Instructor					X							
		Determine the major benefits vocational-technical education can offer the target audience.	Committee					X							
		Determine cost-effective methods for increasing awareness.	Committee					X							
		Obtain estimates for carrying out public awareness activities.	Instructor						X						
		Determine ways to generate revenue.	Committee						X						
		Carry out and evaluate activities.	Committee							X	X	X	X	X	X
	Present program to civic and service groups.	Identify and select service and civic groups.	Committee			X									
		Determine relevant information that would benefit each group.	Committee					X							
		Identify committee member(s) to prepare and present information on vocational-technical education.	Member X					X							
		Schedule, present, and discuss effectiveness of this activity.	Member X and Committee						X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Illustration 4-6. Sample of "Time Lines" Column of Program of Work

Carrying Out a VIP Program of Work

PART 5.

The desired outcome of any VIP program of work is either a **committee recommendation** or a **specific committee action**. If the committee specifies activities which relate to an "advising" role, the end result would be a recommendation for the school or program to consider specific action. On the other hand, if the VIP program of work calls for more of an "assisting" or "advocacy" role, the end result would be the committee's carrying out specific action to accomplish a given activity. Both recommendations and committee action have one overall intent, that is to **improve** and **modernize** the program in order to better serve the needs of the students and the community.

The following information describes a process for developing committee recommendations, committee actions, and periodic review of the VIP program of work.

Formulating VIP Advisory Committee Recommendations

Under the advising role, the VIP advisory committee may want to conduct activities designed to study or assess specific areas of the vocational-technical program. The conclusions and findings of such activities may call for recommended changes in various aspects of the program.

Recommendations should be formulated after the committee has had sufficient time to study and discuss a specific issue and to thoroughly review and discuss the specific recommendation(s). It should be recorded in the minutes that the committee discussed the recommendations, and that it approved them either by consensus or majority vote. Recommendations should be brief (one to two sentences). They should be clear and concise and tell the school/program the specific action that the committee wants considered. Some recommendations may need to be preceded by a rationale. This rationale should include why such recommended changes are needed and how they would be beneficial to the program, school, and/or community. Illustration 5-1 gives examples of VIP advisory committee recommendations.

The number of recommendations should be kept to a minimum. One to three sound, well-stated recommendations in one year could prove helpful as schools move to improve and modernize their programs.

The committee members must remember that they have no programmatic, administrative, or legislative authority. Their recommendations should be viewed as advisory in nature by both the committee and the board/administration.

Schools and institutions have long recognized the importance of having citizen input. The most effective way to strengthen this broad-based input is to promote the VIP advisory committee as a partnership between the school or institution and the community. For this partnership to be effective, the board and/or administrative official should take the time and effort to officially review and consider the recommendations and actions of the committee and respond accordingly.

When a recommendation is denied, it would be appropriate for either the VIP advisory committee or the board and/or administrative official to call for a meeting to discuss the reason for the denial. Alternative methods for meeting the intent of the recommendation may also be discussed. Restraints on time, budget, people, and other resources could be reasons why some recommendations are not acted upon by the board or administration.

In turn, the committee needs to consider the reason why their recommendation was not accepted, respect the authority of the board and/or administrative official, and move on to considering alternative ways of improving or modernizing vocational-technical education.

VIP Advisory Committee Action

When the VIP advisory committee dedicates its program of work to the role of "assisting" or "advocacy," there may not be a need to formulate specific recommendations. Rather, the outcome of the program of work may be for the committee itself to carry out specific activities. Judging competitive skill events, establishing a scholarship program, and assisting students in developing interviewing skills are examples of specific committee action.

The board and/or administrative official should be kept informed as to any action taken by the committee. It may be appropriate for the committee to meet with the board or top administrative officials to brief them on committee action on an annual basis. If a presentation cannot be arranged, a brief committee report should be submitted for their consideration or for informational purposes.

Periodic Review of the VIP Program of Work

The VIP advisory committee should routinely evaluate or review the program of work. This review can be helpful as the committee carries out the functions, activities, and tasks. Specifically, a review can help the committee in determining:

- The extent to which it is accomplishing the program of work.
- The extent to which the recommendations and actions have strengthened and modernized the program.
- Future direction, functions, and activities for the committee.

This review can be either formal or informal. The goal of the review is to help the committee determine its overall effectiveness. As a result of the review, the committee may determine ways it can improve its operational procedures or redirect the committee in other areas of concern. The instructor and/or administrator can be a valuable resource in this review process.

Illustration 5-1. Sample Recommendations

- The Industrial Arts program should consider adding two new units of instruction in the areas of computer-aided drafting and laser technology. To accommodate the additional time required, the program should consider reducing its wood technology unit from 18 weeks to 6 or 9 weeks.

- The Trade and Industrial programs should consider officially adopting the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) standards for updating program safety policies. In addition, the school should consider obtaining or developing NIOSH units of instruction and requiring students to follow these safety standards.

- The board and/or administrative official should consider sending the Trade and Industrial instructor to a factory school to update her skills in the latest technology of the trade. The VIP advisory committee will help defray some of the costs for her participation.

- The Consumer and Homemaking instructor should consider team-teaching units of instruction on coping, stress, suicide prevention, and drug and alcohol prevention with Health Education.

- The board and/or administrative official should consider installing a larger ventilation system for the newly expanded shop area.

- The board and/or administrative official should consider utilizing the loft area in the shop as a classroom. This would provide larger lab space for students to carry out their shop assignments.

- The Carpentry program should consider constructing a small commercial building for the class project. This would provide an opportunity for students to work with material other than that found in residential buildings.

Further Information

For additional information on VIP advisory committees, contact:

Your School or College Administrator

Council on Vocational Education
P.O. Box 1373
Bismarck, ND 58502-1373
(701) 224-2080, or

State Board for Vocational Education
Capitol Building - 15th Floor
Bismarck, ND 58505
(701) 224-3180

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Health Occupations VIP Advisory Committee
Valley City Vocational Center
(1986 Outstanding VIP Advisory Committee)

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VIP Advisory Committee
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(1987 Outstanding VIP Advisory Committee)

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A KEY TO GREATER VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION / PRIVATE SECTOR COOPERATION